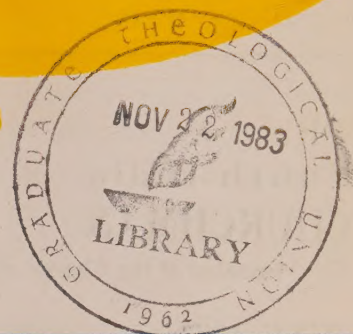




The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● JUNE 1983



FOCUS ON
CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

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Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.

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25 Years Ago

Krishna Pillai lived for seventy-three years. He steeped in the Tamil classics. It was his great ambition to leave behind him a Christian classic which would be treasured for generations by the Tamil people. He toiled for fourteen years and wrote in beautiful Tamil poetry the story of Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress and called it Rakshaniya Yatrikam. This book has now found an enduring place in Tamil literature and is read with great appreciation by all lovers of good Tamil poetry.

Krishna Pillai wrote another book in Tamil prose entitled Rakshaniya Samaya Nirnayam. He brought to this to all the vast learning he had accumulated through the years. He also put into the book his deep devotion to Christianity. Following the example of the Tamil theologians, he critically examined the various religions prevailing in the Tamil country and then expounded the essential doctrine of Christianity.

— Churchman — 1955



Literature: Writers' Role



We are living in a world in which the question of the dignity and equality of man has come up before us as a live and pressing issue. We are entering a new era wherein practically almost all countries have been increasing their 'defence budget' by millions and billions—an era perhaps the most dangerous in its long chequered and turbulent history. It is a period of great material progress and of great technological and scientific advance, and at the same time fraught with the danger of destruction and annihilation for the whole human race. The role of writers, in these circumstances, should be to raise the intellectual, moral and spiritual stature of man to scientific and technological stature that he has achieved. To day man is armed with the nuclear weapons of incalculable power.

The history of humanity is full of bloody wars waged from time to time in which thousands of innocent people were sacrificed to the lust of power. But if a war breaks out now it will be different from any war of which we have read in the pages of history. It will be a total war and the winner will gain nothing, if any winner is left out. Gauging the danger of war, Mahatma Gandhi once said, 'How I wish that literary men and women all the world over would combine to make war an impossibility.' This was the clarion call given by Mahatma Gandhi to the writers and before it is too late writers have to raise their voice. When I was working as an editor of a publishing house, my office was located just in front of 'Golden Threshold', which was once the residence of Sarojini Naidu. I had the

privilege of learning more about her writings and one of the passages which attracted me most is very apt and relevant. 'In this terrible hour when the whole world trembles on the very edge of disaster, a grave and heavy burden rests on the men and women of all races and cultures who are endowed with the noble gift of vision and the sacred gift of words.' Here again a call was given to writers to gird up their loins to do their best to halt mutual killings in the name of war.

Christian writers who are expected to be detached and dispassionate, cannot ignore altogether the events of the time. The works of writers are objective, forceful and penetrating. Literary men and women should concern themselves with the affairs of the time, otherwise, however penetrating their writings may be, they tend to become irrelevant and meaningless. We have been living these years in close intimacy with the forces of evil and with the forms of man-made death. Equipped with all the powers of technology we have landed in a world which is at the threshold of a war. The blood of the millions is hardly dry on the grounds of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and we hear the cries of the anguished people of Beirut Afganistan and Assam—not to speak of the suffering of the oppressed and the exploited people all over the world. Where are the writers and publishers to condemn this carnage and give the troubled world the peace which is offered by the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ? One would imagine that the last Great War which shook the foundations

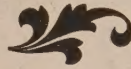
of the modern world and its aftermath, and also the wars with China and Pakistan would have had considerable impact on Indian literature. Unfortunately no such impact is in evidence. Even the movie, *Gandhi*, had to be produced by a foreigner!

Literature in many cases has been the instrument of the passions and interests of the 'ruling classes'. Many creative writers seem to share their narrow prejudices, to be afraid of social change which would undermine their position. It is the duty of writers to elevate the individual, to raise the down trodden and teach man to be a responsible citizen, accountable to the society and to the Creator. God is great because of his infinite love and compassion. Christian literature

should reflect these qualities and induce the spirit of humanity and compassion. Christian publishing houses could provide a powerful ethical stimulus to the literary trends and inspire the writer's to be mindful about the changing times. I wish to conclude this by quoting a passage from the letters of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore which I picked up when I visited Shantiniketan a decade ago.

'In these days of critical anxiety and cruel physical display . . . I pray that the writers of my country, with its deep and ancient intuition of the fundamental unity of love and reality, may play their part in its rekindling.'

—DASS BABU.



Christian Literature

Dr. Oswald J. Smith once wrote : ' what was it that gave us the Reformation? You say it was Martin Luther's preaching. I do not believe that it was. Martin Luther wrote nearly 100 books and circulated them throughout Western Europe, and as a result of the WRITINGS of Martin Luther, there came the Reformation where would you have been today if it had not been for the Reformation?'

I believe that the greatest miracle of our day and generation is the increasing literacy around the world. Three million people learn to read every seven days. What does that mean?

'It means that last week three million people who couldn't read a single word are able to read this week. It means that next another three million people who cannot read a single word this week will be able to read next week. Three million people every week — 150 million people a year.

But what are they going to read? The Communists have the answer. They know something of the power of the printed page. Do you know what you would see if you were to visit the Asiatic world and look at the book stalls? You would see beautifully coloured magazines. They are the magazines of the Communists. The Communist presses are going day and night turning out ton upon ton of literature. Very little of it is being sent to the Western world. Most of it goes to Africa and the different Asiatic countries.

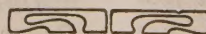
Why, they even claim they won China by the printed page. Now they want to win the whole world. Do you

know how many pieces of literature the Communists printed in one year? Within just one year they printed two pieces of literature for every man, woman, every boy and every girl on the face of the earth. The Communists are on the job.

'What else would you see on the bookstands? you will see another series of beautifully printed magazines. They are put out by Jehovah's Witnesses. Do you realise that Jehovah's witnesses have one press which is the largest religious press in the world, and that it runs day and night? It prints no less than 500 magazines a minute. That means 84,000,000 magazines a year. They are sent to the Asiatic world, to Africa and to many other countries. They are going to win them to their cult if at all possible. They put their money where it will count most. They put it into printed page, into the message.

Do you know how much money the Seventh Day Adventists put aside in one year for the printed page? They set aside over £5,000,000. They know something of the power of the printed page and are determined to get their message out.

'I know of no other way by which we can carry out the Lord's command to reach every creature, apart from the printed page. I know of no method to compare with the printed page. It is needed on every field. Let us put our simple salvation message, filled with Scripture, and let us circulate them far and wide.



Religious and Cultural Perspectives

The REV. DR. S. J. SAMARTHA *, *Bangalore.*

Christian publishing in India has made a significant contribution to the life of the people over the years. Without minimising the achievements of other publishing houses, secular or religious, it is still possible to say that Christian publishing has contributed in no small measure to the cultural ferment, religious renaissance, social transformation, and the growth of critical scholarship particularly in the area of religious studies. The dissemination of ideas through the printed word has acted sometimes as a leaven working silently and slowly, sometimes as an explosive loudly shattering the crust of custom and tradition to reveal new possibilities of growth. Few things contributed so much to break down the isolation of Christians from the surrounding cultural life as Christian literature in English or regional languages. Thus, as we move beyond the eighties into the twenty-first century, and seek new directions for the future it is necessary to acknowledge with gratefulness the rich heritage of the past.

FOURFOLD FOCUS

The focus of Christian publication has been fourfold: to strengthen the life of the Church in the country, to express the Christian faith in terms of our national and cultural heritage, to understand the faiths of our neighbours in the living context of religious and cultural pluralism, and to draw attention to the ecumenical dimensions of Christian life and thought. Nurturing the life of congregations meant interpreting the fundamentals of the Christian faith, particularly the person and work of Jesus Christ, providing materials for study, worship and witness and, in general, using the printed word to help growth in Christian maturity. Communicating the faith required an informed understanding of the faiths of our neighbours. The wealth of scholarly works on different religions published in India by Christian organizations indicates the seriousness with which this task was undertaken, although its theological stance was conditioned by the attitudes of the day. That some of these works are still reprinted and studied is a tribute to the quality of those productions. These have undoubtedly paved the way to develop critically new attitudes towards neighbours of other faiths at the present time. That most of this work had ecumenical dimensions which spilled over the national boundaries is a point which is not always recognized. Without Christian publishing the contribution of the Church in India to the larger pool of ecumenical life and thought would have been far less effective.

There is a further point which should be noted here. In a country where religion and culture are so intimately connected, and where religious substance in one way or another forms the core of cultural expressions, the contribution of Christian publishing, though small, was by no means insignificant. The collection and publication of stories, poems, and proverbs from the rich storehouse of our national heritage at a time when the 'vernaculars' hardly received any attention, the publications on art and painting, music and drama, folk songs and dance, often after painstaking research and careful recovery of oral tradition provided cultural stimulation not just to some Christians but to their neighbours as well. That some of these studies, including those in Indian languages, their history, grammar and literature, are still respectfully referred to and reprinted is again a point to be noted with gratitude and satisfaction.

NEW FACTORS

Some of the enduring values from the past history of Christian publishing need to be preserved as the Church seeks new directions for the future. However, new factors have entered into the stream of history today which have to be recognised and interpreted. When vast changes are taking place all over the world, and human consciousness itself is expanding into wider areas, one should be careful not to look at one's own national life in isolation. What happens in one part of the world affects the life of people in other parts of the world. The Church in India cannot ignore the developments in the world of ecumenical relationship any more than it can remain unaffected by what is happening in the communities of people of other faiths and ideological convictions in our own country. Our global awareness should move beyond a parochial 'Christian' ecumenism to the truly 'ecumenical' ecumenism that embraces the whole human family. Universality cannot be understood as the extension of one particularity. It needs a larger framework of relationships which can hold together different particularities, enabling them to make their own distinctive contributions to the ongoing life of the people.

The expectation of India today is for a just society, and the struggle is growing in intensity for shaping political and economic tools to bring about such a society in the not too distant future. In doing so, while some seek a break with those elements in the past which proved to be hindrances to a fuller life, there are others who consciously search for the new which can, in some measure, be in continuity with the values of the past. Throughout the history of India religion and culture on the one hand and religion and politics on the other were seldom separate. Cultural expressions had within their core a religious substance providing inspiration and guidance. Religious revolutions always had political consequences, and political

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changes affected religious life, particularly the relationship between different religious communities. The rise of Buddhism, the establishment of Muslim kingdoms, the birth of Sikhism, the entry of Christianity during the periods of Portuguese and British rule—all these had political, cultural and social consequences. With a particular kind of 'scientific temper' that is being debated today and the pressure towards a technological society, all religions, including Christianity, are being challenged to justify their relevance to life by making effective contributions to human welfare, the making of a just society, and the larger well being of the nation.

CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

Culture is one of the human responses to the mystery of life, its joys and hopes as well as its contradictions and tragedies. When prose becomes inadequate to interpret the human predicament poetry takes over. When concepts prove insufficient to grasp the mystery of Truth symbols are born. Different times in the history of a people bring out different types of cultural expressions. Painting and sculpture, poetry and music, stories, dramas and proverbs, rituals and symbols have a profound function both in retaining the mystery of life and in explaining it. Christian publishing has to be sensitive to this aspect of contemporary life in the country. In almost all the countries of Asia and Africa, including India after 1947, the post-liberation literature had to face the basic problem of 'the decolonisation of cultures'. The need is to rediscover national and cultural identity by peeling off the spurious layers of colonialism which smothered it. The post-liberation literature in these countries reflects different moods of encountering contemporary reality, sometimes confronting it, sometimes avoiding it, sometimes in despair and disillusionment, sometimes in protest born out of anger and hope. New forms of cultural expression indicate the struggle that is going on in the depths of the spirit to come to grips with the conflicts and tragedies surrounding us particularly those spontaneous cultural attempts in the making by the oppressed people themselves angrily throwing off the restricting forms of the past. The new songs of the people, histories rewriting, stories retold, fresh slogans, street dramas, and wall paintings that speak to the people are all symptoms of a new cultural life that cannot be ignored by literary critics whose cultural norms are often derived from the past.

Christian publishing may not be in a position to make a serious contribution to this area of emerging art forms not so much because of any lack of sensitivity to it as because of inadequacy of human resources available. Nevertheless, it will be impossible to ignore this. There are certain points that need attention in this connection. One is the question of language. By and large, Christian writing and publishing have been in English. This has helped inter-regional communication between Christians, and has also enabled Indian Christians to be in dialogue with their friends abroad. But there is a vast amount of new writing going on in Indian languages, throbbing with life and bursting with passion and anger against injustice, which remains a closed book to those who read and write only in English. What should be the language policy of Christian publishing in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural society as ours in India? Connected with this is the need to raise the level of comprehension and appreciation of the culturally underprivileged masses of people without being patronising or sabotaging the basic aesthetic values of good literature in English or in the regional languages. To this must be added the equally difficult task of 'decolo-

nising' the minds of Indian Christians so persistently bondage to the cultural values of the West. To liberate Christian faith, particularly the person of Jesus Christ and the life of the Church in India, from the grips of imitating Western cultural products should be regarded as one of the more urgent tasks of Christian publishing in the twenty-first century. Writers and creative artists among the people need to be discovered and encouraged to publish. The arm chair literary critic with his lofty ideals and snobbish norms is unlikely to discover them. There are quite a few new story-tellers, including young people and women, whose writings are unknown to most English reading people, much less to the elite ecumenical crowd. How are these new writers to be discovered and encouraged by Christian publishers?

DISCOVERING THE NEW

An equally important point is the matter of adjusting the values of the past to the demands of the present. Christian theological publications this matter has perhaps been kept in mind consciously. Most Indian Christian theologians in seeking to come to grips with the issues of the life of the Church in a multi-religious society have tried to maintain continuity both with the affirmations of the Christian heritage and the enduring values of our national culture. There are, however, other radical attempts to formulate Christologies from within the historical struggles of the people, seeking to *discover* fresh theological insights rather than *formulate* theological statements. The temptation to publish such works for the sake of English reading people abroad who will then comment and theologise on them should be resisted. Encouraging dialogue between Christians in India and abroad is less urgent, though no less important, than promoting serious debate among Christians in the country. The ecumenicals pillover could be a bye product rather than the original intention. Such works should be available to a large number of Christians in the country today for their inspiration, critical sharing and growth in maturity.

The tension between the desire to maintain some continuity with the heritage of the past and the need to break away from it in order to discover the new expresses itself in many different ways. The situations and characters in stories, dramas and poems, particularly in the Indian languages, very often bring this out in a telling manner. In V. R. Narla's play *Sita Josyam* (Telugu) the central character Sita is not the pious, obedient, silent, husband-worshipping, gentle woman of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. She is very different indeed. This Sita is depicted as a girl of wit and wisdom, sceptical of Rama's judgement, suspicious of the intentions of all *rishis* (probably with good reasons), very sympathetic towards the jungle dwelling tribes. She points out that if Rama goes among the peaceful, food gathering jungle tribes bearing arms how could he avoid conflict? The enormous number of short stories in various Indian languages which remain a closed book to those who choose to confine their readings only to English works evokes deeper feelings and bring out major issues in a more pointed manner than ponderous sociological studies or heavy theological treatises. The situations, idealised, for example, in R. K. Narayan's *Malgudi* stories are very different from the longings expressed by men like Mulk Raj Anand in such stories as *The Coolie* or *Old Bapu*. Birendra Kumar Battacharya's *The Golden Goddess* (Assamese) depicts the character of a modern girl who refuses to remain just a 'goddess' either in a village or a town. U. R. Anandamurthy's *Initiation* (Kannada) notes that the relationship between an old aunt

in a village and a modern wife in a city need not always be one of conflict in values but, in spite of difficulties, could become a harmonious one. In *A Death* (Tamil), Na. Muthusamy draws the sad picture of a mind slowly disintegrating because of the pressure of alien surroundings which affect personal relationships. Amrita Pritam's *The Stench of Kerosine* (Punjabi) is not just another story of 'bride burning'. It is a study of a man struggling between the past and the present in deciding between a love marriage and an arranged one. According to Ka Naa Subramaniam, the best anthology of Indian stories available remains *The Tiger King and other Stories* published in German in the German Democratic Republic. Is this a commentary on our Indian publishers, including the Christian? Compared with the enormous number of religious and theological works published by Christian houses why are collections of short stories so few when they could probably be read by more people than those who can afford to buy (but may not read) expensive, imported theological volumes?

The close connection in our country between religion and culture on the one hand the political and social struggles on the other is so obvious that it needs no special mention. The persistence of religions in the country and the fact that religious pluralism is becoming increasingly conscious of itself, providing alternatives for people seeking spiritual solace or social dignity cannot be ignored. Sociological studies which point to the ways in which religion functions in Indian society are indeed necessary. But one should also recognise the validity of the religious experience in human life. The most obvious characteristic of contemporary life, according to some sociologists, is not so much its secularity as its hunger for transcendence. But the context in which religions demand recognition and study is different today than that during colonial times. Many new forces are at work today. The aspirations of the masses of people, the pressures towards a technological society, the need for values, norms and goals to undergird and direct emerging political structures, the birth of new communities of common concern cutting across visible religious boundaries, the hunger for new forms of spirituality — all these and many others call for a critical understanding of the role of religions in contemporary Indian life. People are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of aggressive fanaticism leading to intolerance on the one hand, and of shallow friendliness that ends in sterile co-existence on the other. A new type of religious publications that takes a more critical look at these points is called for.

POLITICISATION OF RELIGIONS

Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity and Hinduism are so bound up with the political, social and cultural life of the country that it is impossible to discuss religions in isolation from the total life of the country. Not too long ago Christianity and Buddhism in India provided alternatives to the socially oppressed and underprivileged. Today it is Islam which provides the option and, in so doing, raises political questions as well. But perhaps what is happening within Hinduism is of greater consequence to the future of society because of its long history, its close connection with the life of the people through the centuries, its inextricable relationship to the structure of society, and the all pervasiveness of its ethos which does not easily permit people to opt out of it.

It is obviously impossible to deal with the vast range of contemporary Hindu life in a few paragraphs. Perhaps,

pointing to a few trends might be helpful to the task of seeking new directions for publishing in this area. There is a growing mood of self-criticism within Hinduism today which is much stronger than what was during previous periods. Critical questions about the social concern of Hinduism which, during the past years were raised by Western Christian scholars, are now being asked by Hindus themselves. Questions regarding the authority of the Hindu Scriptures including the *Sruti*, the place of 'god-man' and 'gurus' so successful in selling capsules of instant Hinduism to Western people willing to pay the price, the usefulness of time-honoured customs that prevent new social experiments, the need to recover and explain the enduring values of Hinduism to humanity as a whole, the movement towards what may be described as 'Hindu ecumenism' — all these and many more issues are being raised by Hindus themselves in many books, learned articles in journals, popular presentations in English and other languages in daily newspapers and other forms of writing.

There is a vocal demand for the breakup of the Hindu social structure the steel frame of which has been the caste system. The struggle against caste is marked by a new intensity today partly because the *Dalits*, are violently rejecting the claim to be included within Hinduism and partly because of the opening available to them in Islam. Therefore the increasing politicisation of religions is now an important factor in the life of the country. This will affect the Christian understanding of the life and witness of the church in the country. The whole question of the form and content of Christian 'mission' in the India of tomorrow has to be drastically reconsidered, making a decisive break with the inherited attitudes, slogans and structures of the past. Without this, the Church in India would become merely the *debris* left on the shores of the country by the receding tide of colonialism.

There is a discernible tension within Hinduism between *being* and *doing*, between *moksha* understood as the final end of life and *dharma* accepted as the individual's responsibility in society. The challenge to the traditional Hindu way of life, to a spirituality largely unconcerned with social responsibility, to a religiosity which does not provide the power to fight against injustice, comes from many directions both from within and without. Is there anguish within the Hindu soul as it surveys the immense suffering, injustice, oppression and corruption that corrode our national life? Isn't there something wrong with a religiosity—whether Hindu or Muslim or Buddhist or Sikh or Christian—which explains away injustice on the basis on some doctrine or which responds to suffering only through works of charity? Judging from different kinds of publications this mood of criticism expresses itself in various ways: questioning the relevance of all religions to contemporary society, drawing attention to the divisive role religions continue to play in national life, raising doubts about dogmas, rituals and institutions that have outlived their usefulness, rejecting all that stands in the way of human dignity and equality however sanctified by ancient custom and religious usage, and seeking those elements in religion and culture which can be interpreted to support human freedom and a fuller life.

LIBERATIVE FORCES

The claim that political and social issues have nothing to do with religion and that the struggle for justice should be delinked from religious imperatives does not do justice to the persistence of religions in Indian life. The more serious question is about the *prophetic* function of religious

people in a multi-religious society where the State is secular in character. The recognition and practice of this function now cuts across visible religious boundaries, thus creating bonds of common interest in society. But how can people of different religious persuasions make serious contributions to the emerging political culture in the country without being accused of 'meddling in politics?' The case for a separation of religion and politics both understood in their institutional forms is strong when one acknowledges that religions have often allied themselves with forces of oppression and have lent their power to legitimise structures of injustice. But there are also *liberative* streams, *revolutionary* urges, *prophetic* voices, *messianic* elements within religions which, time and again in history, have proved themselves to be allies of the poor and the oppressed. To set the record straight it is necessary for Christian publications to draw more pointed attention to these elements today. In Hinduism one encounters these elements down the centuries in its shifts from reform to rebellion against oppressive powers. In its resistance to Islam and Christianity the Hindu *bhakti* movement combined the political and the military with the religious and cultural elements. In Buddhism there is both a theory and praxis of rebellion against oppression. Buddhist monks in China, Burma, Thailand and Sri Lanka have been in the forefront of the struggle against foreign forces. In some countries like Burma Buddhist resurgence has been 'messianically political'. In Islam too, throughout its history, there are many examples of revolt against injustice and oppression born out of religious imperatives and led by religious leaders. Mosques have been centres of people's movements against oppression of all kinds. The Sikh resistance to Islam on the one hand and the Hindu encroachment on the other is well-known. All this is meant to point out that the resources of religions cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to the struggle for a fuller human life.

These matters point to the need for a new type of Christian literature born out of the critical experience of people working together in society and sharing not just in the struggle for justice, but also the quest for salvation. The form and content of such publications, cannot be pre-determined, but have to emerge out of the experience of participation. Removing misunderstandings about Christian intentions, interpreting the contemporary religious life of our neighbours, not as it was described in the textbooks of the past but as it is being genuinely experienced today, helping Christians not to perpetuate false notions about other religions and cultures inherited from a bygone era and warning them not to make statements about the cultural values and religious beliefs of our neighbours which might amount to bearing false witness against them, and helping both Christians and their neighbours to discover new ways not just of working together

but of living together culturally and religiously—the should be included among the concerns of Christian publishing in the coming years.

CHRISTIAN NEIGHBOURLINESS

Behind these are basic questions which Christian writers and publishers cannot ignore if they take our religious and cultural perspectives seriously. For example, how are we to develop criteria to read and listen to the Bible even as we recognise that our neighbours too have their own Scriptures? The hermeneutics developed in the West in particular cultural and historical situations where people did not have to contend with powerful Scriptures of their neighbours can hardly be adequate to Christians in our pluralist society unless we choose to ignore them completely. Is not a new hermeneutics called for? Further, at a time when Christians had little sensitivity to what was happening around them, it was right to draw their attention to the presence and work of Christ outside the visible boundaries of the Church. But has not the time come to recognize that it is not enough to say that Christ is at work in the revolution of our time without asking the question: what are the criteria on the basis of which we can recognize him as the Christ of the living God and not the Christ of our sophisticated imaginations? Such questions need to be raised and discussed within the Church in India today. Although the line of demarcation between those who follow Christ and those who do not, cannot be decided along statistical lines, one should recognise that Christian commitment is not possible without Christian faithfulness. Otherwise, revolutions are likely to be mixed up with revelation, leading to theological confusion and spiritual poverty.

Some of these questions perhaps in different forms are also being raised by our neighbours of other faiths. The authority of the Scriptures, the relation between individual salvation and social concern, the boundary between *dharmakshetra* and *kurukshetra*, the meaning of 'spirituality' in a secular society, the marks of transcendence in a society increasingly dominated by science and technology—these and many others if properly defined and put in an acceptable framework could become common questions for Christians and their neighbours to consider *together*. Dialogue in this context becomes part of the Christian ministry in a pluralist society. It is not a matter of meetings and conferences, but a means of participating in the larger life of our pluralist society which can only be described as 'a community of communities'. Dialogue would then become truly an expression of Christian neighbourliness.

STOP PRESS

With a deep sense of loss we announce the passing into glory and record our immense sense of gratitude to God for the great life and work of the following stalwart missionaries from Britain who had served in the CSI area for many decades before their retirement.

1. The Rev. Ellis O. Shaw died in Edinburgh on 1st April (Good Friday) 1983. Served in the Madras Diocesan Area from 1934 till 1969, sent by the Church of Scotland.
2. The Rev. Peter G. Cochran, died in England on 21st May, 1983. Served in the Madras Diocesan Area from 1939—1963 and again from 1972 to 1981, sent by the Methodist Church in Britain.

THE PUBLISHER'S TASK IN PRESENTING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF THE PEOPLE AT THE GRASSROOT LEVEL*

DR. S. MANICKAM

(School of Historical Studies, Madurai-Kamraj University)

In a world that is torn asunder by conflicting interests opposing ideologies, communal clashes, economic exploitation, corruption at all levels and high-handedness in every dealing, the writers and publishers have an onerous and sacred task to perform. Theirs is not merely a profession, a means of livelihood, but a life-long mission, a crusade against evil and inhuman practices. They have a commitment to a cause and an historic role to play in combating the forces of status quo which block welcome changes. They belong to a creative and prophetic minority which raises its voice of indignation against all ills in society. By patronizing magazines and books which carry progressive ideas, they can successfully sow the seeds of revolution and pave the way for social reorganization. Through the printed pages, the publishers can fire the imagination of readers and violently disturb the stagnant and stinking waters of the social cesspool of India. Through their mission they can help the bottomline of the Indian social pyramid shake off their age-old lethargy and stir them into action.

In a country like India the toiling millions at the grass-root level carry on a miserable existence. Life offers them no thrill. They live like a dumb-driven cattle, perpetually kept in an undesirable state of dependence. Fifty per cent of the Indian population is still living below the poverty-line. Millions of them still grope in mental darkness. Their lot has always been that of a landless labourer, a bonded serf, a helpless victim of a vicious circle. Society is still divided into the antagonistic classes of toilers, who work hard and live in poverty, and masters who do not work and appropriate the wealth produced by others. Education, science, art, economic wealth and political power become the exclusive privilege of a tiny minority—the ruling classes. Their will becomes law, regulating the behaviour of everyone. In this context concepts such as democracy, socialism and secularism make no sense to the toiling masses. For them future seems to be bleak.

They live in a state of physical and economic insecurity perpetually. They are not able to ventilate their grievances. Their cry becomes a cry in the wilderness. People who live around these unfortunate ones behave many a time as passive spectators. The millions at the grassroot level carry on their routine as silent sufferers. Under such circumstances, the Press and the Publishers have a great role to play in breaking their shackles and in acting as their competent spokesmen. They can arouse the dull and dormant conscience of, and sensitizing the callous public opinion to the major problems of the submerged communities, the economically deprived, socially backward, culturally decadent and politically weaker sections,

They should help wider and better dissemination of facts about the socio-economic life of the underprivileged. Through publications the concealed should be highlighted; the hidden and suppressed should be surfaced and be given wider coverage. Watergate, Vietnam and Lockheed affairs are among the recent examples at the international level of the ability of the Press to unearth facts, to forge opinion and to mobilize the public to act. There are pressing problems such as arms race, famine, poverty, racism, inequalities, unemployment and other injustices facing mankind. The medium of publication has a role in investigating socio-economic problems, making them better understood, and generating the will and power in people, to find solutions for them.

In this respect Christian publishers, writers and missionary scholars, particularly of the 19th century, have done yeoman service. Illustrious names such as Alexander Duff, Charles Grant, William Carey, Marshman, Bishop Robert Caldwell, Henry Whitehead, Gustav Oppert, Abbe Dubois, Hutton, Francis Buchanan C. P. Brown and a host of others would bear eloquent testimony to this great and undying fact of history. They have concentrated much on the socio-economic uplift of the people at the grassroot level. Titles such as the *Shanars of Tinnevely*, *Caste in India*, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, *On the Original Inhabitants of Bharatavarsa or India*, *Village India*, *Slavery and Agricultural Bondage in South India in the Nineteenth Century*; 'The Breast Cloth Controversy', 'The Pariahs and the Land', 'The Wrongs of the Pariah', 'The Madras Government and the Pariah', 'Panchama Education', 'Outcaste Progress in South India' would vouch for their abiding interest in such burning problems as indicated by those titles. Christian publications such as the *Madras Mail*, *The Harvest Field*, *International Review of Missions*, *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, *The Foreign Field*, *Kingdom Overseas* etc. always devoted much time and space for discussing such socio-economic problems.

Missionary agitation for the vindication of the legal rights of the downtrodden was equally great. By the power of their tongue and pen they stimulated public discussion on the wrongs done to the depressed communities. By sending deputations and presenting memorandums the Missionary Societies moved the Government to redress the grievances of the Harijans. To substantiate this point I can give a concrete illustration.

During A.D. 1891 an animated discussion had been going on in South India concerning the whole problem of the Pariah rehabilitation which at this time came to be widely known as 'the Pariah Question'. It was first begun by a vigorous paper entitled 'The Disabilities of the Pariah' read before the Madras Missionary Conference by Rev. William Goudie, a well-known Methodist Missionary of the *Madras District*. His paper was soon follow-

* A paper presented at a Consultation, arranged by major Christian Publishers in India, at the YMCA Tourist Hostel, Delhi, 28th February to 3rd March, 1983.

ed by a number of powerful newspaper articles from the pen of Rev. G. Mackenzie Cobban and others. The matter was soon warmly taken up both in the official and non-official circles, and the Governor-in-Council had publicly thanked the Rev. Goudie for calling attention to the subject, and for the spirit and energy with which he had advocated the rights of these oppressed people against their powerful caste masters. The attention of the Government was drawn to the same subject also by a sensational paragraph on the Senneri Pariahs of the Chingleput District in a letter from H. Tremeneere, Principal Collector of Chingleput. On reading this paragraph, the Government of Madras called upon Mr. Tremeneere for a detailed report which he prepared under the title 'A note on the Pariahs of Chingleput'. In the meanwhile, the question was taken up by the press and discussed not only in the local newspapers in Madras (vide *The Hindu*, 1st October 1891) but also in the dailies of London such as the *London Times* (vide 13 July 1891). A Conference of Representatives of the leading missionary bodies was also held and a Memorial was presented to the Government on 26th May, 1891. In this Memorial the missionaries urged the Government to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the condition of the Pariah population and their disabilities. They stated in this document, by giving a number of instances, that agrestic slavery of the Pariahs still continued even after the implementation of the *Slavery Abolition Act V of 1843* and the *Indian Penal Code of 1861*, and that these people faced almost insurmountable obstacles in obtaining house-sites, land and even elementary education. Finally the matter attracted the attention of the British Parliament and copies of questions and answers on the subject in the House of Commons were furnished with the despatch of the Secretary of State dated 7th July, 1891. Thus there was a new and widespread awareness on the 'Pariah Question'.

As a result of these activities and propaganda, the Government of Madras was persuaded to pass two important Government Orders, one on the 30th September, 1892 (G.O. 1010, 1010A, Revenue) and the other on the 1st February, 1893 (G.O. No. 68, Education) on the papers relating to the conditions of the Pariahs. These Orders provided for a number of concessions which helped the improvement of the Panchama community in the Madras Presidency. Thus missionary propaganda and publications did a lot in the field of investigatory journalism.

By experience with writers and publishers of the present day, we have found that what is omitted is just as important as what is highlighted. In the name of national security, issues such as social justice, democratisation, people's participation, unemployment and other allied issues are coolly and conveniently omitted. For reasons of saleability, questions such as poverty, concern for the less fortunate members of society are not given serious attention. Almost everyday we read in the papers some news on caste-class war, communal riots, bonded labour, Harijan killings, police atrocities, 'flesh trade' etc. But very few people seem to be perturbed over these issues. Writers do not touch these topics and Publishers turn away from such themes, for fear of authorities or they are unpalatable to the taste of readers, I suppose. So, there is a black-out on such socio-economic problems. Everything appears to be normal and pleasant. However, there are exceptions to this general indifference. To illustrate such exceptions let me recount here a recent incident.

A few months ago, two young men, Velmurugan and Sheik Sathar, undertook an All India expedition on foot,

covering the country between Cape Comorin in the dov South and Kashmir in the far North. While passing through Andhra Pradesh, these two curious men halted at a quarry near Hyderabad and made some casual investigation. To their great dismay and surprise, they discovered about nine hundred persons—men and women, boys and girls—being employed in splitting stones in the quarry by rich and powerful slavemasters. On enquiry they found out that these unfortunate people were Tamilians from the Salem District and that impelled grinding poverty and adverse economic conditions the homebase, these people allowed themselves to be carried away as bonded slaves. For a day-long hard work they were given a meagre sum, a morsel of food and a thatched shed. Under inhuman conditions these people dragged on their miserable existence. When the plight was reported by these two young adventurers in the well-known and widely circulated Tamil magazine *Kumudam*, it captured the attention of many and also of Mr. Baktavatsalam, the Secretary of Civil Rights Association, Madras. He immediately took up the matter and drew the notice of the Andhra Govt. At the instance of the A.P. Government, a Magistrate was commissioned to conduct an inquiry and report his findings. The findings of his investigation also confirmed the report published in the *Kumudam* and further revealed the appalling conditions in which these people were condemned to live. Though threats of death were freely held out by the powerful slavemasters, Mr. Baktavatsalam was not deterred in his endeavour. Finally by the intervention of Police and the Government of Andhra Pradesh these helpless people were freed at last.

From this account we can very well understand how important a role that Publisher can play. Magazine and dailies such as *Tuklak*, *Kumudam* and *Indian Express* can do a still more laudable service to the people. But for such flashes in the Press, the misery of the people at the grassroot level will go unnoticed. In this respect *Pookkoodai*, of the C.L.S. Madras, also does appreciable work. However, it is still only in a state of infancy.

Slavery is an important aspect of the socio-economic history of Tamilnad, for instance. But this has been a subject from which most scholars have shied away. There has been a very few articles on this subject. There is a reason for this hesitancy on the part of the scholars. It is a topic that is closely associated with caste system and its implication in inequalities in the spheres of human dignity and economic opportunities. But it is also a subject that has a lot of relevancy to the present, with the new emphasis on human rights and the government's efforts to eradicate bonded labour. Thanks to the Christian Literature Society, Madras, at last a research monograph has been published on this sensational topic.

Another area which should receive the attention of writers and publishers is law courts and the manner in which justice is meted out to the people at the grassroot level. The judges in our country are presiding over a system that cannot do justice to the poor. Justice is denied to most because justice is delayed and is costly. The undertrials will continue to serve sentences that may not be awarded to them. Lower courts are hand in glove with the executive. Police does not provide protection to the needy and often it is found on the side of the elements it is supposed to fight.

Urban poverty and slum-dwelling constitute another sphere upon which more light is to be shed. The urban poor are found in slums, squatter settlements and on the

pavements of all major cities. Based on the NSS data for 1978, it is estimated that 48 per cent of the total population is below poverty-line, 50 per cent in the rural areas and 38 per cent in the urban. The major cities of India such as Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras have huge slum populations and it is thought that one-fourth to one-third of the population of the metropolitan cities lives in slums and squatter settlements. In Bombay, Madras and Calcutta it is estimated that 30-35% of the population comprises the urban poor who live in *bastis*.

The urban poor who live in the slum and squatter settlements of the metropolitan cities are primarily migrants from the rural areas and they belong mostly to the low income groups and the Scheduled Castes. On all the social and economic indicators, such as health and nutrition, education, employment and income, the urban poor are seen to suffer great discrimination in the allocation of resources and basic needs and services necessary to live in human conditions. Surveys of the urban poor in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta show that a majority of the people suffer from what has been called 'Deficiency diseases' such as gastro-intestinal disorders, diarrhoea, worms and respiratory diseases.

The vulnerability of the urban poor to these diseases is related to inadequate nutrition and environmental conditions that pose serious health hazards. Under-nutrition is certainly a major factor which contributes to high rates of mortality, especially among the small children but it is also related to the lack of drainage, poorly maintained public latrines which are in the major cities. At the same time, because of their poverty slum residents have limited access to medical facilities. Thus the urban poor live in poverty and squalor. Their children are in rags, often found in the company of piglets, playing on the heaps of garbage. Though they perform sanitary work and hard manual labour, the urban poor receive income which with they can hardly make both ends meet.

Issues such as Harijan killings, discrimination against women, irrational and superstitious beliefs and practices such as human sacrifice, child marriage, dowry system, evils of cinema, sex perversion, drunkenness, usury, caste prejudices and the like should increasingly receive the attention of the publishers. They should champion the cause of the people who come under constant harassment of the powerful vested interests such as political demagogues, landed magnates and the socially high-placed ones. By supporting the downtrodden, the publishers can really commit themselves to democracy and human rights. They can reflect upon the sensational developments such as the Meenakshipuram conversions in Tinnevely District, the Mandaikkadu incidents, the Belchi incidents in the North and similar questions and thereby contributing to a new kind of social history which is now in the making. Reflecting upon social movements in Asia, the Christian Conference of Asia succinctly portrays this fact:

'A new history is being written in our time. No longer are the victories and exploits of the powerful the central points for an understanding of history. Now the deep movements of the human spirit and the growing solidarity of the people are the reference points for a perception of history. Empires rise and fall, kingdoms come and go, but the people remain as the permanent reality of history.'

Jesus lived with people and ministered to them. It was in living with people that Jesus understood the shape and purpose of his own ministry. He put the outcastes, dispossessed and victimised at the very

centre of his teaching and proclamation of the kingdom of God. It is from this perspective that we must view the deep aspirations of the people to be the subjects of their own history.

Under the impact of the Gospel, people who were no-people are gaining personhood, identity and dignity. Harvey Perkins speaks of this experience as peopling the no-people. This is a movement of the people who as subjects of their own history free themselves from their state of bondage, being crushed or made dependent, accepting inhumanity and humiliation, and move towards a future hope and recognition.

Thus we notice a perceptible shift in the content of historical writings. By reading the signs of time, historians too have changed their stand. Today, historians deal with people and society much more than mere political events. They concentrate on the evolution of human societies, the factors that operate in them, the currents and forces that move them, the motives and conflicts, both general and personal, that shape events. In this way history basically deals not only with lives of great individuals; in a sense it may be said to consist of the sediment of the lives of millions of smaller men and women who have left no name, but who have made their contribution. Their lives make the material of history as a coral-reef is built up out of the lives of millions of minute marine creatures.

So, publishers and writers should also now come forward to encourage the publication of such literature which highlight the problems of the common man. They should discover and encourage promising and talented writers to produce such literature. A suitable example to this would be the *Kalai Kaveri* Publishers of Tiruchirapalli. They have made use of the talents of late Thiru Kannadasan, the Poet Laureate of Tamilnad. By making use of his massive scholarship in Tamil and rich experience as a mature and seasoned writer, the *Kalai Kaveri* has produced the famous *Yesukaviyam* in Tamil, which is the *magnum opus* of Thiru Kannadasan.

Publishers and writers should try to create a socio-economic awareness through publication which is an effective means of communication and an important segment of mass media. Through their powerful ministry they should help spread the message that in the present day set-up, destinies of nations and people are irrevocably linked together; and that there is no possibility for a few to enjoy a richer and fuller life and not feel responsible for the plight of the many who are denied even basic necessities of life. The problem is one of inequality leading to injustice, a habit of imposing needs and attitudes upon societies where they do not fit. The publishers should put their pointing finger at such issues.

The task of the publishers is therefore to present such formidable problems as poverty, unemployment, inequality and injustice, exploitation, flagrant violation of human rights and wickedness in highplace—all ultimately leading upto dehumanisation. They should identify unhesitatingly the economic, social and political structures that intersect at various levels and promote not the development of people but their dehumanization. It is the responsibility of the publishers to proclaim the presence of Christ as redeemer in the struggle for justice, freedom and peace and to create the environment for the reconciliation of

(Contd. on p. 13)

The World Christian Tamil Academy

PROF. P. A. SATHIASATCHY

Secretary, Madras

The Tamil language and literature

Tamil is as much a modern language as it is ancient and classical. The recent discovery of an inscription in a cave near a village not very far from Madras dispels the doubts in many a mind about the antiquity of Tamil culture and its literature. The inscription speaks of a chieftain *Athiyaman* who is described in the annals of Tamil classics as a mighty warrior, a lover of peace and as a patron of fine-arts and literature. This inscription is ascribed by the experts to the 3rd century B.C.

Tamil literature springing out of spotless emotions of romance and warriorship centuries beyond the beginning of the Christian era and flowing down since the beginning of the Christian era through the great periods of religious upheavals and spiritual awakenings that brought into play the latent power of literary creativity in Tamil people thus bringing into existence priceless garlands of epics and other forms of devotional poetry has today entered into a period of unprecedented revival and resurgence penetrating into every aspect of social, religious, cultural and political life of this country.

Christian Contribution to Tamil

The fact that Christianity has made immense contribution to the growth of Tamil language and literature over centuries cannot be refuted by any. The service rendered to Tamil by Christian scholars, particularly by Christian missionaries who had come here from other countries, in areas such as lexicography, linguistics, printing, creative writing and systematization of religious philosophies are only too well known to scholars who are awake! Poetry is the back-bone of Tamil language and literature. And Christian Tamil poets have rendered the stories of the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus in exquisite poetry of lasting value, not unequal to the great epics of this land.

The Tamil Church

The tragedy of the present generation of Tamil Christians is that a vast majority of them are not aware of what Christianity has done to Tamil. We have allowed our past to be buried into oblivion and because of various reasons disconnected ourselves from the main stream of Tamil culture and its language and literature with the

result that a serious hiatus has come into existence between the renaissance of Tamil and Tamil Church. We are far from communicating the Gospel in a vocabulary that is relevant or in a language that could convey any meanings to the other fellowmen of this country.

There is an explosion of love for Tamil language and literature not only in Tamil Nadu but also in many parts of the World. This was evident at the World Tamil Meet held at Madurai in January 1981. If the Tamil Church intends to be what it should be it should plunge and get caught up in the explosion. At a time when the country is in resurgence, a moment that demands action the Church should not be caught napping. We cannot keep Jesus out of picture in the present juncture of literary renaissance which in the context of sharing the message of the Gospel is crucial to us.

Tamil Nadu is quite ready and willing to listen to the transforming message of Jesus if only the church could speak to the people in a language that is acceptable to them. An aptitude for poetry and music runs in the blood of an average man in Tamil Nadu. This is true in the case of other regions also. The Tamil church is beginning to realize that unless she is prepared to recapture the spirit of the past and transmit and translate the Gospel in simple and dynamic literary forms that go in unison with the renaissance of the present day she will be nowhere near the concept of fulfilling the mission for which she is sent.

The World Christian Tamil Academy

The formation of the World Christian Tamil Academy is a sure step forward in the right direction. Besides conducting conferences and seminars the Academy has ongoing programmes of restoring some of the valuable Tamil Christian literatures from decaying and destruction, and reprinting worthy works of the past with suitable commentaries and above all to provide incentives and impetus to writers so as to bring the best out of them with a view to share the love of Jesus with others.

The Office-Bearers

President :—RT. REV. DR. SOLOMON DORAISAWMY

Secretaries :—REV. DR. T. DAYANANDAN FRANCIS

PROF. P. ANDREW SATHIASATCHY

Christian Literature Work in North-East India

MR. D. PACKIAMUTHU

GAWAHATI - ASSAM

The Christian Literature Centre with headquarters at Gauhati is the main literature organ of the Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India. Except Assam, all the North-East Indian States have sizeable Christian population of all denominations and in Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, the Christians are in the majority. Unlike all the other states of India, the question of Christians being a minority community does not exist here. The governments of these states are headed by Christian Chief Ministers and other ministers in the cabinet. Literacy rate is fairly high in some of the hill states compared to that of in other states. This is a fortunate situation and there is scope for development of Christian literature.

Hundreds of dialects are spoken by these various tribes living in isolated pockets. Speakers of each dialect are few in number and are often unintelligible to each other. Some 40 of them were reduced to writing a hundred years ago by the Western missionaries. There are New Testaments, Bibles and hymn books and the dialects have not developed beyond that. One reason for this is the limited number of speakers of each language or dialect.

The interest evinced by the tribals to possess a copy of the Bible and a hymn book in their own languages is amazing. The hymns are chiefly translations from English and the people have achieved remarkable adeptness in singing them. One can hope that the day is not far off when they will compose their songs in their own dialects and sing them. Hymns are printed in ten to fifteen thousands in each language at least every two or three years and each hymn book runs about 500 to 600 pages with a minimum of 400 hymns. Some of their hymns are printed with tonic solfa and the price per hymn book runs on the average more than Rs. 20. The people are willing to pay any price for hymn books provided it is printed on good paper and bound in leather.

We have plans to run four workshops during this year for this purpose. We had a Trainers Training Workshop at Dhyan Ashram, Calcutta, from 13th to 26th November 1982, to train people to impart the art of writing to the other members in the area. Ten people from different areas of North-East India participated successfully in this course. Following this, the Christian Literature Centre organized the first workshop of the school of writing in January 1983 from 10th to 18th for about 15 young people. We have plans to hold similar workshops in Shillong and Mizoram. We are happy to report that the young people show much interest in this new form of writing and they

all admit that it is being introduced to them for the first time. If the local churches start their own magazines and give these young people an opportunity to contribute, it will be a great help indeed.

The Christian Literature Centre is also encouraging leaders of the churches and other interested members to write books. We are happy that we were able to publish **A CHANCE FOR THE CHURCH** by Rev. K. I. Aier (General Secretary of the CBCNEI), dealing with some of the problems of the churches in North-East India. Dr. Anugraha Behera, a professor of theology in Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, gave us an interesting manuscript entitled **THE GOSPEL WITH A DIFFERENCE**. It is a study on the Gospel of St. Mark and he has written it in such a way that both theologians and lay people can enjoy the reading. We have also brought out Sadhu Sundar Singh's **AT THE MASTER'S FEET** in Mizo language and we intend getting the Sadhu's books translated and published in different dialects also. A significant publication since our arrival is a compilation and publication of a directory-cum-diary under the title **NEIC Diary—North-East India Christian Diary** and it contains information regarding local churches, Christian organisations, institutions and also important world and national Christian organisations. It is gratifying to note that the people received the diary with great enthusiasm as it is the first of its kind in the history of the church in North-East India.

The Christian Literature Centre also encourages people to write the history of their own churches so that they will become a reference record for posterity. We have published a title **THE CROSS OVER NAGALAND** by Rev. Phuveyi Dozo, a Nagaland Christian minister and church leader. The history of the churches in the Konyak area and Chin area are in the process. The Christian Literature Centre has already published **THE GROWTH OF BAPTIST CHURCHES IN NAGALAND** by P.T. Philip and **THE GROWTH OF BAPTIST CHURCHES IN MEGHALAYA** by Rev. K. I. Aier. We have also associated ourselves with ISPCK, Delhi, in bringing out a joint edition of **CHRISTIANITY IN NORTH EAST INDIA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES** by Dr. Frederick S. Downs (professor of church history in the United Theological College, Bangalore). It deals in considerable detail with the genesis and expansion of the Christian missionary movement in the region of North-East India.

There are a number of Christian bookshops in North-East India run by churches and individuals. Publishing is done by Christian Literature Centre at Gauhati, Synod Book Room at Aizawl in Mizoram, Tura Book Room at Tura in Meghalaya and Christian Literature Houses Society at Silchar in Assam. We hope and pray that great thinkers and writers will come out of this area in the near future as this area is not inhibited by the burdens of any past literature.

In 1980 the Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India requested the Church of South India to spare the services of Mr. and Mrs. D Packiamuthu of the Christian Literature Society to be sent as literature missionaries to help them in the development. Therefore, the Christian Literature Centre has now started a school of writing to train young people in the art of writing.

U. T. C. Principal, Dr. J. Russel Chandran Retires

Resolution of the Governing Council of the United Theological College in grateful appreciation of the services of Dr. J. R. Chandran

We, the members of the Governing Council of the United Theological College, Bangalore, unanimously resolve to place on record our deepest gratitude and appreciation of the contributions of the Rev. Dr. J. R. Chandran to this College and through the College to the Church and Society at large and express our best wishes on the eve of his retirement after 33 years of illustrious service in the College as a teacher from 1950 and as the Principal from 1954 to 1983.

This we do in grateful acknowledgement :

of the pioneer and creative role of Dr. Chandran as the first Indian Principal, of his vision, dedication and courage in making this College into a major centre for advanced theological learning through the development in size and quality of the student body, the Faculty, new degree and non-degree programmes, library resources and buildings ;

of his commitment to preparing men and women for the mission of the Church in the concrete context of India today that has resulted in programmes of the College such as inter-faith dialogue, involvement in the socio-economic and political concerns, intensive practical work experience, courageous explorations in indigenous expression of theology, worship and proclamation, co-operation with secular educational Institutions and dialogue with University teachers ;

of his faith in the ecumenical dimension of theological education which has resulted in a fully ecumenical faculty in the College, the merger of the B.D. and M.Th. programmes of the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College with UTC, academic co-operation with Dharmaram Pontifical Institute and the appointment of Roman Catholic theologians and others as honorary professors of the College ;

of his conviction that authentic theological learning and growth can take place only within responsible personal and academic freedom which has led to greater participation of students in the life of the College, responsible experiments with new ideas and courses by members of the Faculty and to the status of autonomy to the College within the Serampore system granted in 1976 ;

of his tireless endeavour in strengthening the financial position of the College through raising large endowments and, more importantly, through building up an increasing financial support of the College from within the Indian Church through a network of friends of the College all over India ;

Also in grateful appreciation :

of his leadership in the wider life and mission of the Indian Church, not only through his personal role in various capacities such as the President of the Senate of Serampore, the Chairman of the Synod of the Theological Commission of the Church of South India and the President of the Christian Union of India but also through organizing joint Faculty studies and contributions to various programmes of Churches and the National Council of Churches in India ;

of his rich contribution to the ecumenical movement at the national level in various capacities including his role as the General Secretary of the Joint Council of the Church of North India, the Church of South India and the Mar Thoma Church and also at the level of the World Council of Churches in various ways, for example, as the Vice-Chairman of its Central Committee for a period ;

of his passion for justice and peace that has led him to speak forthrightly on issues of regional, national and international importance, to participate in secular agencies for social change and in Christian movements such as the Christian Peace Conference, and through these to enrich the processes of theological reflection and learning in this College ;

All these contributions are greatly enhanced by his profound personal commitment to God in Christ, a highly disciplined life, his constant search for deeper dimensions of the Gospel and his single-minded loyalty to the mission of the Church. Along with these are his personal qualities of genuine openness, quickness of perception, sensitivity to the needs of others, his compassionate pastoral concern and his ability to accept into a rich and wholesome relationship even persons of different persuasion.

A Statement from the Youth Committee of NCCI

Indian Scene today is fraught with many alarming features. In almost all areas of life and in all parts of the country a phenomenon is emerging announcing death on its trail. This observation was made at a Seminar called by the N.C.C.I. Sub-Unit on Youth, at Bangalore, January, 28-31. The participants included the members of the Youth Committee and a few special invitees who are actively involved in work among youth in various parts of the country. The Seminar reflected on the theme, 'Jesus Christ—the Life of the World.'

Affirmation of life in Jesus Christ lays upon us the inevitable task of detecting the many death-dealing forces affecting life in India. The Church which bears witness to Jesus Christ, who is the Life, has the responsibility more than any others to undertake this task. However, the image of Jesus Christ seen in and through the Indian Church is not adequate enough to provide the needed inspiration. Therefore, the Churches and Church Youth Groups in India are called upon to return to the Gospels to re-discover the unmutated image of Jesus Christ which has both relevance and revolutionary traits. Such a return and re-discovery will re-enforce the faith of young people to counter all evil forces and principalities undauntedly.

The Seminar focused its attention on the life situation of the following categories of the people in India, namely, the women in the slums, the Dalits and the young political detainees. It was horrifying to note that the oppression against these categories of people is systematic and legitimised.

The women in the slums are faced with the two pronged problems of poverty and sex discrimination. At the construction site where they toil together with men, they meet with sexist taunts, and are paid lower wages than men for the same amount of work. At home they are bound to put up with lack of proper civic amenities for a conducive family life. Even the so-called welfare programmes aimed at ameliorating their conditions are often

forced upon them without respecting their self-dignity as persons.

The Dalits, better known as Harijans, are the victims of the stratified Hindu society. The adoption of the term 'Dalit', signifies their oppressive status and their growing awareness of the same. Although the Government of India has since Independence announced a number of welfare schemes for their upliftment, no significant change has been brought about in their social status. In recent times, the Dalits are experimenting with social upheaval through mass conversions to Islam. Sadly, Christianity is not even considered as an alternative because of the existence of casteist influences and distinctions in the Indian Church, particularly in the South.

The young political detainees in India, particularly in Tamil Nadu, experience the most brutal form of State repression. In the name of weeding out extremism, all those who exhibit extra-ordinary commitment to civil liberties and profess any scientific political ideology are imprisoned, tortured and often put to death in fake 'encounters'. The investigations undertaken by the PUCL.... (Peoples Union for Civil Liberties) groups in India, have revealed the fact that many detention laws are grossly abused by the state machinery, the Police.

After making a comprehensive study of the life situation of the above categories of people, the Seminar unanimously opined that the malice in India is deep-rooted and is related to its unjust socio-economic structure. Therefore, all attempts at change should primarily address this basic problem. The Church Youth Groups are called upon to play a vital role in supporting the various movements working towards such a change. In particular, they are called upon to support the Women's Movement, the Dalit Movement and the Civil Rights Movement. By so doing, the Church in India, will become more people orientated rather than project orientated, and thus become worthy of the calling in Jesus Christ who came to give life to people and life in abundance.

Participants and Members of the Youth Committee.

The Publisher's Task in—(Contd. from p. 9)

the poor who are alienated by the current social, economic and political structures.

The primary task of the Publishers is thus to establish solidarity with those who are deprived of their human rights and suffer from various forms of oppression. They should make it quite clear through their publications that we must be careful not to 'consider the poor as the problem and the rich and the powerful as agents of the solution. The truth is the opposite. The present situation is created and sustained by the rich and the powerful. Therefore, they and the system they uphold are the problem. The situation of injustice, exploitation and oppression is of their making. As they are part of the problem, they should not be expected to offer solutions. The poor who are victims of the present situation will be the ones to find the way out'.

So, it is the sacred task of the publishers to demonstrate their solidarity and oneness with the exploited and repressed group by advocacy research and action. By doing so they might even sustain economic loss but such losses should be offset by subsidy from outside agencies and churches or they simply should not mind it. By publishing less expensive and at subsidized rates, they can do a lot for extension of knowledge. Monetary considerations are by no means unimportant but they are not the major criterion. Strategy to promote sales is quite essential. Investment of enormous capital, involvement of talents and trained skills, business management and better human relations are of utmost importance. But what is the use of all this, if the whole enterprise misses its mark, loses its vision? So, as Christian publishers, we should have the service to the people, particularly to those at the grassroot level, always in view and steer all our efforts towards this and this end only. Only then the name of Christ will be glorified.

MADHYA KERALA DIOCESE

C.S.I., Mar Thoma Youth Consultation

Mission — to Evangelise

Churches should unite to evangelise. To evangelise does not mean to win converts. "The affirming of human worth, the naming of the oppressor, the giving of power to the powerless, the bringing about of a new sense of community in solidarity with the oppressed, and the relating of their struggle to the self-giving sacrificial love and death of Jesus, are words and actions that are fundamental to evangelism."

The youth Movements of the Mar Thoma Church and the C.S.I. Central Kerala Diocese have resolved to work jointly to evangelise. This was the resolution taken at the joint Youth consultation held at Mar Thoma Youth Centre, Adoor on 15th-16th April 1983.

The paper presented by the CSI Central Kerala Diocesan Youth Movement projected the following basic motives behind the formation of CSI. (1) The CSI is committed to evangelism. Its evangelical tradition is the total liberation of humanity. (2) It has an ecumenical vision and regards the whole humanity as a divine family based on justice, peace and human rights. (3) The formation of CSI was not a merger. "the conservation

of the heritage of each uniting churches, preservation of all that was distinctive in their lives, but inevitably enriched by the union." (R. D. Paul). The new Church ought to be indigenous Church to evangelise the country. (4) The CSI is prepared to make any type of sacrifices for the sake of evangelisation.

Churches should unite to liberate the masses from these oppressive structures and also change their vision of starting highly sophisticated institutions which are beneficial to a very few.

The Diocesan Youth Movement sought the support of the Mar Thoma Youth group in their programme for securing more laymen participation in the Church and also for democratizing the Church Structures. The Diocesan Youth Movement supports the oppressed in their plea for justice. Unity should not suppress the oppressed but it should encourage them.

The Mar Thoma Youth Movement expressed the concern and assured their support in all programmes of the Diocesan Youth Movement. The two Youth Movements resolved to constitute a CSI-MTC joint youth commission for joint Youth programmes and to reflect on social problems.

MATHEW KOSHY

President of CSI Central
Kerala Diocesan Youth Movement

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News from All Over....

OLD TESTAMENT TRANSLATION

For the first time in over 2,000 years Jewish scholars have produced a complete translation of the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew — this time into contemporary English. It took eleven Israeli and American scholars more than 25 years to do the job.

Published by the Jewish Publication Society this brand new translation is based on the most accurate rendering of the original Hebrew Bible. Most of the previous translations were revisions of earlier ones, not directly from the Hebrew. The only previous time a group of Jewish scholars completed a translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew was 2,300 years ago in Alexandria, Egypt, where according to tradition 72 scholars took 72 days to translate the five books of Moses into Greek, known as the Septuagint. The new Old Testament will be made up of three volumes.

— BSI

Indonesia Education

Indonesia, the world's fifth most populated country, is facing the challenge of overcoming poverty with a massive programme of education for development. Part of this deals with nonformal education, and the Indonesian governments' Directorate of Community Education (PENMAS) — Direktorat Pendidikan (Masyarakat) cooperates with the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts, USA, in a nationwide project.

The two organizations have published a complete record of the project in Indonesia: Implementation of a Large-scale Nonformal Education Project.

Three chapters give an overview of PENMAS and the goals of the project. The next three chapters describe staff training conducted during the project. Another chapter describes and analyzes the learning materials used by PENMAS. Finally there is a section on the evaluation of the project with a look at future possibilities based on the project experience.

What do you want to say?

The aim of every journalist should be to tell their reader the facts in a crisp and correct way. In the first chapter of *The Word*, Rene, J. Cappon brings across the need to use simple, direct language in writing and elaborates upon this goal in the rest of the book. He says good writing stems from sifting words — a secondary processing of ideas which spring to mind.

The text of his book is entertaining, informative and very readable. His message of simplicity well-presented, with the exception of occasional lapses into sexist pronouns which imply that all writers are male. Cappon

uses marvellous description to illustrate his points and emphasizes that journalists' words are their tools which mustn't be allowed to turn into 'fatty tissue'. He promises: 'Clear your mind of the cant of officialese, the prefabricated phrase and hand-me-down wordings, and you'll begin to move from the swamplands of language to the bracing highlands.'

Humor comes through in many examples of prose from other writers which the author chooses to indicate his idea of good and bad styles of writing. He draws attention to the common faults of jargon, boring repetition, unnecessary extra weighting of adjectives and nouns, ambiguity from careless grammatical construction and misplacement of words — shortcomings which often render a piece of writing unintelligible. Which each quote, he explains how to eliminate these problems and escape muddled 'flowery' sentences.

The 'News Writing' chapter encourages economy with words: rather than omitting detail, the writer needs to make each word actually say something. Cappon has many tips on how to precis tedious phrases, trim verbose paragraphs, make better use of clauses, eradicate, 'decorative afterthoughts' or reverse the sequence of words for easier reading. No one should have to wade through a pile-up of surplus words in order to extract the meaning.

Another section is devoted to identifying and writing the leader over the main news point in a summary which should draw the reader further into the story. 'A good lead is like a fiddle string the product of the right tension, says Cappon. It must highlight what's different about this particular news item in what could be a run-of-the-mill event. (I let that last cliché slip in to give a taste of Cappon's pet hates.) He favours plain, conversational English, steering clear of cluttered background material which obscures the facts. 'Readers should be told what is rather than what isn't—with clarity and precision.

His chapter headed 'Tone' deals with the writers' choice of words which should aim at a pleasant style that won't 'jar' the reader. He examines motives behind what you're writing, warning journalists to beware of giving biased opinions.

Yet more sections in the book cover 'pitfalls' concerned with the wrongful use of verbs; how to incorporate quotes into your writing; how to 'color' your articles and bring them to life; recognition of threadbare expressions, clichés, metaphors, feature writing to bring out human interest; general hints and rules; and finally a compendium/dictionary on the usage of certain words which get a black mark from the author.

Asia Region names Kim

The Rev. Kim Kwan Suk, president of the Christian Broadcasting System in Korea, is the new chairperson of

the WACC Asia Region. He was elected at its biennial assembly held on January 31 to February 4 at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand.

He succeeds Alfred Simanjuntak of BPK Gunung Mulia, a Christian publishing house in Jakarta, Indonesia, who had served the Maximum of two four-year terms.

Other officers elected include the Rev. Kevin Engel of the Australian Christian Literature Society, Vice-chairperson; Miss Teresita Hermano of the Communication Foundation for Asia, Philippines, Secretary; and Sim Tong Seng of the Methodist Book Room, Singapore, treasurer.

Five new members were elected to the WACC Central Committee: Mrs. Prem Kishore of India; Miss Teresita Hermano of the Philippines; Dr. Judo Poerwowidogdo of Indonesia; and the Rev. Felix Premawardana of Sri Lanka.

—C.C.A.N.

Printing by hand:

A secret Christian press in the Soviet Union which used a hand operated printing machine made out of a bicycle and washing machine parts with home-made ink, is now ten years old.

Kristianin Press of the unregistered Baptists has printed about a half million items of religious literature, mostly New Testaments and Bibles, in seven languages.

It works under extreme difficulty, however, with more than 30 people arrested because of their involvement in this publishing, according to Keston News Service.

JAPANESE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE POPULAR

The Following is excerpted from the 20 March issue of the *News Letter* of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan (United Church of Christ in Japan). Its author is *News Letter* editor, George Gish.

TOKYO—In a country with less than one per cent of the population officially counted as Christians, it seems incongruous that the Bible has been the long-standing best-seller of books published in Japan. But the growing role of Christian writers of contemporary Japanese literature is perhaps an equally astounding fact. One proof of this increasingly important role of Christian literature is the recent publication of the fourth multi-volume series featuring Christian authors by the inter-denominational Kyo Bun Kwan (Christian Literature Society). With a long history of publishing Christian literature in Japan that goes back to its founding in 1885 as the former Methodist Publishing House, the Kyo Bun Kwan released the first volume of its 18 volume Compilation of 'Contemporary Japanese Christian Literature (Gendai Nihon Kirisutokyo Bungaku Zenshu)'.

Edited by the late Protestant writer, Shiina Rinzo, and the wellknown Catholic author, Endo Shusaku, this first compilation met with such a good response that it was followed by the 15-volume 'Compilation of Modern Japanese Literature (Kindai Nihon Kirisutokyo Bungaku Zenshu)'. The last volume of this series was released in 1982 featuring

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the various translations of the Bible. A separate 13 volume series of the religious writings of Shiina Rinzo, Shiina Rinzo Shinko Chosakushu, was begun in 1977 with the last volume also being released in 1982. Shiina, who lived from 1911 to 1973, was baptized in 1950. His postwar writings gained a wide following as he stretched out a ray of hope amidst the chaos and futility of his times.

No sooner were these two latter series completed than the kyo Bun Kwan launched its next project with the release in November 1982 of the first volume of the 15-volume, 'Compilation of Japanese Christian Children's Literature (Nihon Kirisutokyo Jido Jio Bungaku Zenshu)'. The projected date for completion is 1984. The scope of this latest series will cover works by Christian writers of children's literature from 1877 to 1981. It includes such well-known literary giants as Shinazaki Toson and Kagawas Toyohiko. A supplementary volume will also be appended of short stories for children selected from works submitted at large before the end of March 1983.

In reviewing this collection of children's literature by Japanese Christian writers, Isshiki Yoshiko, herself a writer of children's stories, spoke of the exciting discoveries to be found. 'To realise that the pioneers of children's literature in Japan also professed the Christian faith was an important discovery,' she said.

In a recent lecture at Tokyo Union Church, Endo Shusaku spoke of challenge faced by Japanese Christian writers. 'Our job is not to tell how great or good Christianity is,' he said, 'We must deal with such questions as human evil and also be honest in writing about the past sins of the church. But our greatest difficulty lies in trying to communicate the Christian God to our fellow Japanese who have no interest in God or Christianity.' It is at this point that Endo makes the connection between his humorous and serious works. 'To get others to laugh,' he concluded, 'is a way of communicating to make friendship with Japanese who have no interest in Christianity.'

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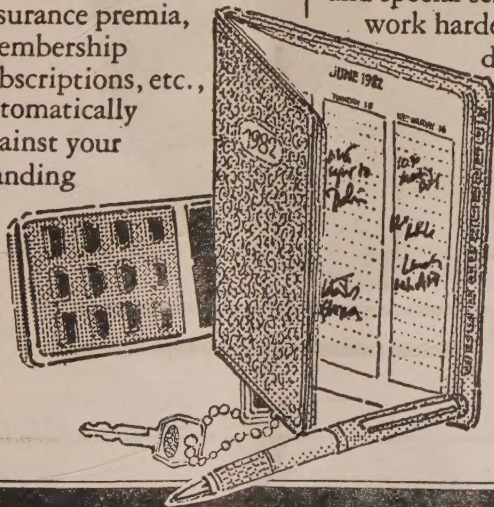
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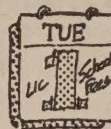
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